

OFFICE OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES
2008 PROGRESS REPORT
October 2007 to September 2008

Introduction

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) uses program performance measures (PPMs) as the yardstick to measure progress towards its strategic goals and objectives as prescribed through the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and related authorities. Seven performance measures have been tracked by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) since 2004, in order to gain an understanding of the efficacy and efficiency of the ONMS. They offer a mechanism for assessing the fulfillment of our mandate in the NMSA.

This progress report gives the ONMS a means to internally assess its own progress and to provide external audiences (e.g., the budget offices of the National Ocean Service (NOS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Department of Commerce (DOC), respectively, or the OMB) with the most current and detailed ONMS performance data. This is the third annual report published by the ONMS on this topic; therefore, it not only provides a snapshot of the current performance of the ONMS, but it also shows the progress made by the ONMS since 2006. The results of the progress report show how well the ONMS meets its mandates and how efficiently it uses its funding. It also assists the ONMS in internal prioritizing of activities. In addition, the progress report can be used as a messaging tool to inform various stakeholders, including Sanctuary Advisory Councils, on the efficacy of the ONMS.

This report focuses on the ONMS efforts made in fiscal year 2008 (October 2007-September 2008). Since 2007, the ONMS has refined the methodology used to track progress on the four outcome-oriented measures for the ONMS (i.e., measures that show how the efforts of the ONMS can result in real change in the environment per the ONMS's mandate). Condition reports, which include information on the status and trends of water quality, habitat, living resources and maritime archaeological resources and the human activities that affect them, now form the basis for our understanding of the status of sanctuary resources. To date, condition reports have been published for Stellwagen Bank, Fagatele Bay, Monitor, Gray's Reef, and Olympic Coast national marine sanctuaries.

Results of the FY07 Performance Evaluation Process

Of the seven PPMs tracked by OMB, five were found to be on track to meet their final targets, down from six in 2006. The permit efficiency has reached its final target and was discontinued; this is the first OMB-tracked performance measure completed by the ONMS. Two of the four outcome-oriented measures for the ONMS are behind target. This includes the habitat performance measure, which was on track in FY07 but has fallen behind, as well as the living marine resources performance measure. The decrease in performance for both of these performance measures is mainly due to a more rigorous assessment of sanctuary resources conducted during the preparation of site condition reports, rather than on a measurable decline in

resource quality since last year. The issues of concern tend to result from external factors over which individual marine sanctuaries have limited control, including invasive species and continuing habitat loss. Fishing impacts also continue to be of concern at some of the individual sanctuaries. This merits attention since the outcome measures are the most direct tool used by the ONMS to show the difference it is making in protecting these special places. A short description of the status of each performance measure follows.

1. Number of sites in which water quality, based on long-term monitoring data, is being maintained or improved

Targets:

Year	Target	Actual
1994	Baseline	1
2000	4	4
2005	6	6
2010	9	
2015	12	

FY08 Status: 9 sites; on track

Explanation:

Nine sites are on track, which is the 2010 target. Those in which water quality is not maintained are experiencing issues with intrusion of water originating from the coast, warming water temperatures, and/or contaminant and nutrient loading.

Action:

The ONMS should continue to prioritize resource protection activities aimed at improving water quality.

2. Number of sites in which habitat, based on long-term monitoring data, is being maintained or improved

Targets:

Year	Target	Actual
1994	Baseline	1
2000	4	4
2005	6	6
2010	9	
2015	12	

FY08 Status: 7 sites; behind schedule

Explanation: Seven sites are on track, which is below the 2010 target of nine. In 2007, nine reporting positively, but two of those sites (FK, HI) reconsidered in light of results discovered during preparation of their condition reports. Those that are not on track are experiencing issues with marine debris, siltation, invasive species, and the loss of seagrass and coral habitat.

Action: The ONMS should continue to prioritize resource protection activities aimed at improving habitat

3. Number of sites in which living marine resources (LMRs), based on long-term monitoring data, is being maintained or improved

Targets:

Year	Target	Actual
1994	Baseline	1
2000	4	4
2005	6	6
2010	9	
2015	12	

FY08 Status: 2 sites; behind schedule

Explanation: Two sites are on track; which is behind the 2005 target of six. In 2007, five reporting positively, but three of those sites (FK, OC, HI) reconsidered in light of results discovered during preparation of their condition reports. Most of those in which living marine resources are not being maintained are experiencing issues with invasive species, decline of key species, coral bleaching and disease, biodiversity loss, debris ingestion, and problems associated with entanglement.

Action: The ONMS should concentrate more effort into resource protection activities aimed at improving living marine resources

4. By 2015, 100% of the sanctuary system adequately characterized

Targets:

Year	Target	Actual
1994	Baseline	1
2000	4	4
2005	6	6
2010	9	
2015	12	

FY08 Status: 92%; on track

Explanation: 92% of the sanctuary system has been adequately characterized, which is above the 90% target for 2008.

Action: To meet the 2015 target of 100%, the ONMS will need to address specific components of site characterization topic areas.

5. By 2008, 100% of ONMS permits are handled timely and correctly

Targets:

Year	Target	Actual
2000	Baseline	
2001	10%	
2002	20%	
2003	30%	
2004	40%	
2005	60%	
2006	80%	64%
2007	100%	97%
2008	100%	100%

FY08 Status: 100%; accomplished.

Explanation: 100% of the permits were handled timely and correctly in FY08.

Action: This performance measure will be discontinued. The National Permit Coordinator will continue to ensure that all sites maintain the high level of efficiency that has been achieved to date.

6. By 2010, all education programs implemented in national marine sanctuaries will be assessed for effectiveness against stated program goals and objectives and National Science Education Standards.

Targets:

Year	Targets	Actual
2004	5%	Baseline
2006	25%	25%
2008	65%	65%
2010	100%	

FY08 Status: 65%; on track

Explanation: The ONMS has assessed the effectiveness for 65% of its education programs. The progress is on track for the final target of 100% in 2010. This year, the working group developed a reporting system to document education program evaluation at each site, which assists in the determination of the level and extent of evaluation currently being conducted.

Action: A training program has been initiated to build the capacity of each site when conducting evaluation.

7. By 2015, 100% of known historical, cultural and archaeological resources within each national marine sanctuary boundary will be inventoried within the NOAA's ARCH database

Targets:

Year	Target	Actual
2005	Baseline	0%
2006	10%	0%
2007	None	13%
2010	50%	
2015	100%	

FY08 Status: 40%; on track

Explanation: 50% of historical, cultural and archaeological resources are inventoried in the database, which is on track for the completion target date of 2015.

Discussion: The ONMS should continue to gather data on the other known sites to complete the information needed in the database. In particular, FKNMS and the West Coast region sites will need assistance from a marine archaeologist to contribute fully to this performance measure.